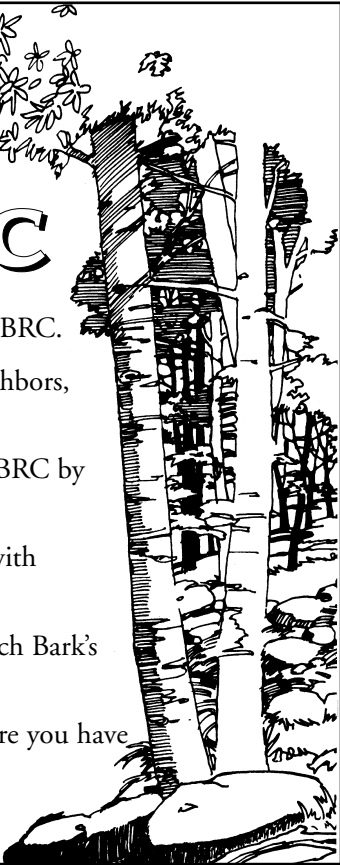


Mark Your Calendars
for 2005!

June 1	BRC Summer Office Opens
June 5	Spring Clean-Up Work Weekend
June 19	BRC Staff Orientation
June 26	BRC Opening 1st Session
July 10	BRC 1st Visitation Day
July 20	BRC 1st Session Ends
July 21	BRC Opening 2nd Session
July 30	Alumni & Board Day
July 31	BRC 2nd Visitation Day
August 13	BRC for Boys Ends
August 17	BRC Family Camp Begins
August 21	BRC Family Camp Ends

It's
Easy to
Help BRC

- Send a tax-deductible donation to BRC.
- Promote BRC among friends, neighbors, family and colleagues.
- Refer a prospective camper to the BRC by phone or email.
- Host a gathering of BRC alumni with Directors Deering and Mattson.
- Send us news to include in the Birch Bark's Alumni News column.
- Ask us about our "Wish List" before you have your spring yard sales.
- Join us for Alumni Day-July 30.



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

P.O. Box 148
Waterford, ME 04088

BIRCH ROCK CAMP



A nonprofit corporation

BOARD OF
DIRECTORS

- Becca Brewster
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SPRING

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THE BIRCH BARK

P.O. Box 148, Waterford, Maine 04088
Winter: (207) 741-2930 Summer: (207) 583-4478
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Rich Deering, Alumni Director • Michael Mattson, Camp Director

THE ALUMNI NEWSLETTER OF BIRCH ROCK CAMP

ALUMNUS PROFILE:
HAROLD J. "MIKE" DENEALT '36 - '79

by Ann Deneault, Rich Deering and Dave Weeks

Throughout the decades of Birch Rock, there is one familiar face that has reappeared from decade to decade helping to maintain continuity, stability and most of all, an endless supply of energy....that is the sheer force of Mike Deneault.

Mike's camp story begins in 1936, when he was cad-dying at a country club in Burlington, VT and he received a call from his high school coach, Buck Hard. Buck was a senior counselor and trip leader at Birch Rock Camp. He called Harold to come to East Waterford that summer as a counselor because the camp was short-handed. Harold packed his things and away he went for the next five summers.



Phyllis & Mike Denault
BRC 2000

Immediately nicknamed "Mike" for no apparent reason by then Head Counselor Charlie Downes, Mike has been his calling card ever since. Mike's early summers were fond times for him. He graduated from Burlington High School in 1937 and continued his education at the urging of his mentor Buck Hard at Kimball Union Academy for two more years. He was active in the daily camp program but also lead wilderness trips on the rivers and lakes of Maine. During this period, Mike went to New York City to the Bilks Athletic Training School until his call for active duty led him to the United States Army. However, these were not the only significant changes in his life.

While serving at Fort Devens in Ayer, MA

in 1941, Mike encountered a beautiful lady on a train in White River Junction, VT. Although their first encounter was brief, Mike was smitten but he never got this lady's name. Months later on base at a USO dance his life-long friend and fellow Birch Rocker, Bill Evert '30s reintroduced Mike to "the lady on the train." Her name was Phyllis. Mike vividly recalls their reunion:

It seems Bill, who was also a former Birch Rock Counselor and at Kimball Union with me, had met her at a dance at the USO. Later that year Bill was transferred to California and he asked me to take care of Phyllis.

We saw each other many times that fall and then I was transferred to Virginia but continued to see her on week-ends. It soon became clear that we were seriously in love and thinking of marriage.

Mike and Phyllis were married on April 17, 1944 at the Fort Devens chapel. For the next few years, Mike was transferred overseas while Phyllis remained with her family until his discharge in February 1946.

Upon Mike's return to the States, he and Phyllis reunited to return together to Kimball Union Academy where Chief and Onie Brewster were serving as the Head of the school. Mike worked in athletics while his consort helped out with athletic events.

They were a devoted and dedicated team for the academy and for the Brewsters. As was the tradition for many who worked with the Brewsters, the Deneaults came to McWain Pond in 1946. Mike recalls their second summer together at camp in 1947:

We had our first child Michael in May and introduced him to camp life at the age of one and half months. Our cabin was the Trip Room, which is now the Main Office today. There was no electricity, just the oil lanterns. Our second child Jason was born 18 months later, so our camp days were put on hold.....

The Deneaults continued their tenure at KUA having a third child named Ann in 1953. Being committed to the values of nurturing and taking care of their own immediate and extended families, Mike and Phyllis decided they needed to leave school life in order to help Phyllis’ dad with the daily operation of his automobile sales business. For the next decade the Deneault Dynamic Duo returned to Ayer, MA and worked tirelessly for the family until the business was sold in 1966.

Having always enjoyed the passion of mentoring and teaching young students, Mike heard of a new opening for an experienced athletic trainer and educator at Milton Academy. Another new chapter had begun for the Deneaults as they returned to academy life for the next eighteen years in Milton, MA.

Upon hearing the news that the Deneaults were at Milton Academy, the Brewsters were anxious for them to return to Birch Rock and McWain Pond. Mike assisted Chief Brewster with the daily operation of the camp, while Phyllis took charge of the menu planning, the purchasing of food, the arrangement of flowers and helped Onie.

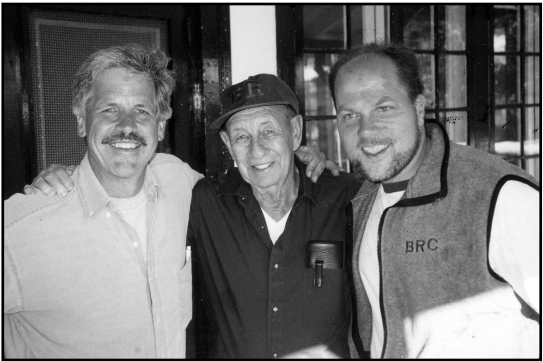


Phyllis, Mike & Baby Michael 1946

In 1973, loss and change would come to BRC. Chief Brewster suddenly passed away during the early camp season. Forever loyal and devoted, Mike and Phyllis lead the camp forward to a new generation. Then Head Counselor Dave Weeks recalls those transitional moments:

Recognizing the need for strong and compassionate leadership to support the BR community, as it was coping with the loss of its found-

ing champion, Mike and Phyllis comforted Onie Brewster and honored Chief’s memory by continuing the Camp traditions and providing the campers with an important lesson in Help the Other Fellow. Chief Brewster had taken the responsibility of carving each boy’s name on boards to be placed on one of the lodge walls. Mike gave me the responsibility to carve the year, group names and special whale and seal achievements and each camper was to help Birch Rock by carving his own name for the lodge. Every boy that summer honored Chief’s memory by doing the best he could to carve his name. Thanks to Mike’s recognition that strength comes from collective empowerment, the staff and campers sustained the Camp’s spirit during that significant transition in Birch Rock’s History.



Dave Weeks, Mike Denault & Rich Deering

Mike and Phyllis continued to run Birch Rock for the next five seasons. In their last summer of 1979 at BRC they mentored Dave Weeks, who assumed the directorship in 1980. Mike had embraced Chief Brewster’s values of resourcefulness in wilderness camping, determination to achieve to the best of one’s ability in activities, pride in personal conduct and caring for others not only at Camp but also in the Waterford community. Dave Weeks expressed his appreciation for Mike’s mentoring with

these words:

Mike’s encouragement and confidence in my abilities to direct Birch Rock helped me as a director to successfully carry on the traditions established by Chief Brewster.

After 18 years at Milton Academy and decades at BRC, Mike was ready to retire from school/camp life and travel with his beloved Phyllis. After retirement they moved to Leominster, MA. Ever community conscious, Mike began a part-time job working for the local hardware store. He did, however, take time to travel with his pop-up camper – (named “Rocky”) that he and Phyllis had received as a retirement gift from their many friends from Birch Rock and Milton Academy.

Feeling the need to be closer to family, Mike and Phyllis moved to the Berkshires in 1999. The Deneaults decided to build their dream home next to their daughter, Ann. Mike was going to help with the landscaping while Phyllis would help design colors and schematics for their new home. As their new life was progressing, Phyllis was diagnosed with Cataplexy and along with that, Narcolepsy, which is a sleeping disorder. The next two years were very straining as Phyllis’ health declined. She passed away in March 2002.

Sharing his family’s grief, Mike came back to Birch Rock later that summer. The camp community paid tribute to Phyllis and dedicated a garden in her memory. As her life was celebrated, Mike’s Birch Rock friends rallied around him giving him their support as Mike had so often given to others in the spirit of *Help the Other Fellow*. Birch Rock Camp has been, indeed, fortunate for having had the leadership of Harold J. “Mike” Deneault.



The Greatest Camp in the World

by David Barrette ’98 -

Of the thousands of people that I have seen over my seventeen years, I constantly analyze how these everyday people measure up to the fine young gentlemen that I am honored to be tightly bonded to every summer since 6th grade. Ever since I experienced my first summer at “The Greatest Camp in the World,” or so said the Staff shirt, there hasn’t been a year that I haven’t taken home an enlightening experience from that magical place.

It all started when I had come back from living in Paris, France. I left my previous house in California to venture to another country at the age of seven and fresh out of 1st grade. When I came back from France I was 10 years old and I was going into 5th grade. That year at Tatnall Private School was absolutely miserable for me. I had the view of a first grader of how an American student was supposed to act. I thought that the girls chasing the boys game was still taking place at recess and that guys were supposed to despise girls. I couldn’t have been more wrong. I was ridiculed and belittled in front of my peers for having no clue how to fit in. It was after that year that I moved to New Hampshire and I thought that it was going to be worse then Delaware. My mother wanted me to go off to camp that summer to interact with more kids my age and take something from that and use it in school. She picked the perfect place. Birch Rock Camp was in Waterford, Maine in the middle of nowhere.

When I got there I didn’t know what to expect. My dad was driving and we turned right onto the gravel driveway. On my right was a basketball court and green fields for soccer, archery, and baseball. My dad continued down the hill and I started having second thoughts about going to this overnight camp for three weeks. When I got down there a swarm of counselors were there to greet me and my family. They helped me bring all my stuff down to my assigned cabin, which was number three. When I settled down and made my bed my parents left and I was stuck. Little did I know that the summer there was going to be humbling of myself? I made friends quickly there and had a great time at the activities since I loved sports. The camp had a special feel to it. It was more of a community then it was a family. Every Sunday we would go down to the fire pit and look out onto the lake. We would sit there silently for a minute and just listen to the sounds of nature and pure nothing. After the three weeks I begged my parents to let me stay for another three weeks, alas they missed me so they took me home.

It was seven years ago when I went there and I have gone back every summer. One of the best moments I have every season is sitting outside with my best friend and looking up at the stars and thinking about everything that is happened on the inside rather than the outside. It is the chance I get every year to mature a great deal in a short period of time. This summer was my first summer on Staff and I was put in charge of four eight-year-olds. It was really fun taking care of those kids. They had so much energy but I cherished teaching them new things like making their beds and sharing and things about becoming a more responsible person. We still had a lot of fun though with the occasional pillow fight and reading to them every night. It is the best thing in the world to see a kid succeed with the skill you taught him. It is the best camp I have ever been to and it is a great experience for all young kids. I am a better person because I went to Birch Rock Camp.

David will be a attending Guilford College in Greensboro, NC this fall.

BRC NATURE PROGRAM RETURNS

By Camp Director
Michael Mattson ’83 -

When I was a camper in the 80’s, Ryck Birch taught nature at Birch Rock with enthusiasm and creativity. I signed up all the time wondering what weird science project, plants or animals we would study and learn about that day. Nature had been a program at the Rock since Uncle George Howe taught about butterflies, rocks, animal tracks or whatever. How could a great program like this be lost?

This fall our incredible counselor Ryan Massey ‘00 suggested his twin brother Blake. What a perfect compliment to our overall campcraft adventure program by adding another Massey brother! Blake Massey has a Master’s in wildlife conservation and a BA in biology. Over the past several years he has spent his time doing field based biological research and also spent a summer in Aspen, CO, where he developed and taught environmental education for lower and middle school children. With his incredible background he was just the right man for the job. When he agreed to take on the task, we were overjoyed and have been looking forward to this summer ever since.

We are incredibly excited to see what Blake will put together as a program for this summer and hope our boys go home wiser about the world around them and more excited about our precious environment.



Our Thanks

By Campaign Chair, David Weeks '70s -

Your donation is an acknowledgement of the value of Birch Rock in character development. Just as you are appreciative of the “gifts” BRC has given to you, I as chair of *A Call for Character: The Campaign for Birch Rock* am grateful for your “gift.” Your contribution will help enhance and sustain Birch Rock’s special summer camp experience. This experience continues to foster the development of resourceful, compassionate and purposeful gentlemen who will make a positive difference in today’s world. We graciously applaud the following 2004 Capital, Annual & Scholarship Gifts to the Birch Rock Community...

Anonymous (8)	The Chris & Nick Cogswell Family	Ginny Joyce	The Pacelli Family
Amy & Steve Abbott	Roger & Ann Cogswell	Thomas Joyce	Eliose Petrik
The Noah Aronson Family	Chris Cogswell	The Nate Judge Family	Henry and Joy Plate
Reginald and Jean Anderson	The Cohen Family	The David Kane Family	The Tuck Richardson Family
Christian Abajian	The Jack Coster Family	Zach Karabell	Matthew Rines
The Will Alexander Family	Ellen Deering	Ann Kemble	Stephen Rines
Peter Bowser	Jack and Ann Deering	The Charlie & Owen Knights Family	The Nick & Chris Rios Family
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George Brett	The Tom Foorman Family	The Colin McMahon Family	Mark Sutherland
Tom Bull	The Willie Feuerman Family	The Peter & Henry Mumford Family	The Sutherland Family
The Grant Carlson Family	The Jonathan Geiger Family	Marty & Maxine Mendelsohn	The Scott Thompson Family
The Carson Family	The Johnny Goodrich Family	Tom & Barbara Miller	The Alasdair Thornton Family
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The Andrew Chase Family	Phillip Goodwin	Cort Morgan	Janice Walker
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The Andy Churchill Family	The Grant Hailer Family	The Nick Musciano Family	Whizzer & Meg Wheeler
The Andrew Clemence Family	Clare Hanaan	The Tim Myers Family	The Weeks Family
The Sam & William Cleaves Family	David Hawkes	The Peter Neilson Family	Keith & Lilo Willoughby
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The Alex Chapin Family	Peter & Annie Ingraham	The Charles & Harry Netzer Family	The Andrew Ziegler Family
Harry & Jenna Cleaves	The Pearson Jenks Family	James & Wenda Brewster O'Reilly	
Pamela Cobb			

Reflections from the Rock

by Richard Deering '73 -, Alumni Director



Alas, spring has finally sprung in Waterford after an extraordinary and prolonged winter wonderland of snow, snow and more record February - March snow. Thanks to the generous graces of Mother Nature and the hard-working “McWain Hill Snow Removal Team,” protecting our hillside summer home, the Birch Rock Campus anxiously awaits the arrival of campers and staff from neighboring Norway, ME to far away Malmo, Sweden. Our 79th season is officially underway. BRC here we go!

I continue to be fascinated by your own personal stories and recollections about Birch Rock from spending time with many of you. Tales of trips that you experienced in the majestic White Mountains or the infamous Rangeley Lakes expeditions are some of the most treasured camp folklore. And there are so many more memorable moments including: the recent BRC Triathlon; our Crimson & Gray challenges; Biroca Blasts; Campfires; Tree-talks; Mountain Biking the River; Long Distance Swims; legendary camp characters; good olde Maine camp cooking; Cross-camp-capture-the-flag and our newest hit: Geronimo. These are just a few of the many fine camp treasures and traditions that are sacred lifelong memories.

Indeed, campers are guardians of the present moment. They love traditions that are fun and meaningful and that weave the past to the present. At Birch Rock, we actively engage each other to try new things. We seek to become active listeners and lifelong learners. We empower each other to take responsibility for ourselves, while reaching out to help others.

As our campers arrive each summer with their novel wings, we collectively create a magical spirit of fellowship, adventure and fun. As many of you have shared with me and others, Birch Rock is more than just a summer camp. It is one very special community. Birch Rock is a warm, safe and wonderful place to build your own character, spread your wings and fly!

In this spring edition of the **Birch Bark**, we are delighted to share from our graduating high school seniors (and future camper leaders) essays about their own unique personal adventures and influences from the Rock. You will be fascinated by their stories, as we are blessed to share their talents with you.

We collectively invite you to fly back and share your story with us this season.....



Behind Blue Eyes

by Andrew Chase '98 -

As a lifeguard one is trained to protect and to save lives. Many sit with rescue tubes and whistles in hand for years, hoping to have the opportunity to make a rescue that may never come. Money for doing what seems like nothing.

While most young people were enjoying the few and precious sunny days of summer vacation, mine were spent swimming, practicing countless rescues, and administering CPR on plastic dummies at Birch Rock Camp. My reward: my lifesaving certificate. That fall as I began work at the local YMCA pool, my weekends were spent perched in the lifeguard chair. Bored to pieces, I would find myself counting ceiling tiles.

That particular Saturday in February was more of the same, working a typical six hour shift from mid afternoon until close. Just minutes before clearing the pools of patrons and locking up for the evening I noticed a young girl who appeared to be having a great time, splashing and giggling. I smiled, turned away and continued to scan the pool. Again, my eyes were drawn back to the young girl who now seemed like she was having a little too much fun. It was apparent that she was struggling to hold her head above water, yet there were no screams or calls for help. My co-worker and I rushed to the girl to investigate. As we drew nearer the seizure’s intensity increased and seconds before our outstretched hands and rescue buoys reached her, she slipped under the surface.

The next thing I remember was aligning my head and mouth with hers and methodically looking, listening and feeling for any sign of a heartbeat or breathing; there was nothing. I immediately tried in vain multiple times to open her mouth which was clinched and locked tightly by the seizure. As my co-worker began to thrust the victim’s abdomen the water from the little girl’s lungs opened a small crack of her mouth for two of my breaths to enter. Her body was now turning a deep shade purple as we continued to perform CPR. The thirty most tense and helpless seconds of my life passed; before I saw those beautiful blue eyes open. The terror, blankness and panic

Continued on Page 4

in her stare was indescribably ghastly, beautiful and touching at the same time.

The seizure had subsided as suddenly as it attacked; our training and CPR had worked; I had just saved a life. My last view of those innocent and beautiful face and eyes was as the paramedics rushed her out the door, she was able to force a smile on her lips before I lost her in the massive crowd which had assembled.

The sight of that young swimmer’s eyes; those eyes opening and her body coming back to life is one of the most powerful and beautiful things I have ever seen. To this day I have been unable to visit or even learn the name of the girl, or the breathing adolescent girl behind those blues eyes.

Andrew will be attending Embry Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Florida this fall.

**A FEW WORDS FROM
SETH BREWSTER ’67**

Chairman, BRC Board of Directors

Dear Members of the Birch Rock Family:

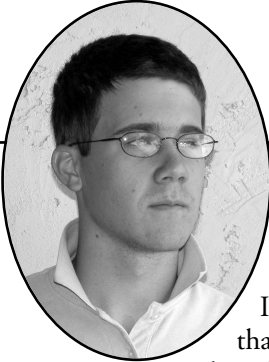
Over the past five years, I have watched what the Birch Rock experience has done for my son, Ben, and how it has helped him grow and expand his frontiers. As we now approach the 79th summer of Camp, we continue to look for those boys (and families) that can benefit from Birch Rock.

If you are aware of any prospective Birch Rock boys (and families), please forward their names and contact information on to Mike Mattson and Rich Deering at birchrock@aol.com. Help introduce another family to Birch Rock!

My best wishes to all,



Seth Brewster



My Birch Rock

by Galen Arnold ‘98

To me Birch Rock has become so much more than just a place to get away for the summer, it has become a second home. I know that gets said a lot, but it is true. There is something about the Rock that makes it welcoming. It is difficult to say what exactly makes the place so appealing, and it is not just one thing in particular, rather a combination of many great things. Things such as the people, and the environment, I don’t mean the physical environment, the woods and the lake and such. I mean the way it feels, knowing that who you were and what you did in the past can be forgiven and forgotten, knowing that no matter what obstacles you will face there will always be people willing to help you as much as they can. Every year every person at Birch Rock, camper and staff, are given a clean slate, and every year people are surprised that someone they have been dreading to see again has changed for the better. I know that there have been numerous occasions that someone I did not like came back the next year and was a whole new person, and if I had not been patient and given them an opportunity to show that they have changed, I would have missed out on interacting with a great person.

Over the years what Birch Rock means to me has drastically changed. I first thought that it would be a nice place to go to get away from the people that I hated in Mesa, and for the first year or two it stayed just as that. But as I got older and my outlook on life changed I began to realize what Birch Rock really was. Since I have been on staff I have come to realize the full extent of Birch Rock and the workings behind why everything is the way it is. As a camper there is so much that goes into the place that is not seen and therefore not appreciated, but once on staff one sees and begins to appreciate these things. Things like the hard work that counselors and administrators do behind the scenes.

What Birch Rock has done for me is something that I never thought would be possible; it has turned me into a teacher, and has helped me decide what to do with my life. Before I was a staff member at the Rock the last thing I would have decided to pursue as a career was teaching. But with the help of Birch Rock, and my teachers at school, I have come to the conclusion that I want to be a teacher, and for the moment Birch Rock lets me be that. There is something about seeing a kid do something right, that I taught them, for the first time that makes me feel good about myself, and makes me feel like I have made a true impact on that kid. That’s what Birch Rock has done for me, and I thank every one at Birch Rock and every one that gets me there for it.

Galen will be attending Arizona State University this fall.

*Family Camp
2005*

Season 5 is filling up, and we hope you and your family can join us too.....

Birch Rock’s Family Camp provides an opportunity for families to experience a combination of recreation and fun in the Maine woods on McWain Pond. These special days are designed for families to retreat and refresh themselves for the “work and school” world and rediscover their own enthusiasm for lifelong learning. Most of all, Birch Rock Family Camp is a time to relax and enjoy!

Family Camp is a wonderful venue for all ages to enjoy camp life in group activities or just do your own thing! Each family member may sign up for daily activity offerings which are facilitated by Birch Rock’s talented staff. This program is offered from August 17 – 21st with flexible days of attendance. For more information, visit our website: www.birchrock.org.

WISH LIST

BRC appreciates your contributions to the camp community. Some items we wish for are:

- New or Used Chainsaws
- Used Automatic Pick-Up Truck
- Old Push Lawnmowers
- A Wood Splitter
- Water Bubbling Cooler (\$250)
- Framed Backpacks
- Two Man Tents
- Baseballs, Tennis & Lacrosse Balls
- New Kitchen Cooler
- Kayak & Canoe Paddles
- Art Supplies
- Washer & Dryer
- Nature Program Equipment

Birch Rock Camp is a 501©3 nonprofit corporation. All donations received are tax-deductible.

Please contact us birchrock@aol.com if you might be able to accommodate any of these wishes.

Thank you!



It’s Raining

by Pearson Jenks ‘99

“But it’s raining!” They yelled. “So?” I replied. “Rain never hurt anyone.” Their young faces peered up at me. “C’mon, forget your raincoats; we’re going to go play.”

It had been pouring all day, and my campers had been cooped up for way too long. As we left the cabin they were boiling with excitement. I could barely contain them as we bounced up the wet hill, our shoes sinking into the thick mud. The sky was a dull gray, seeming to try to bring our moods down, but with fruitless attempts. The giggling of eight year olds made it seem like the sky was clear and blue. Soon we came to the soccer fields on the top of the hill, and before I could finish telling them that they could now run around, they blasted out in every direction, like happy dogs just let out of the pound.

After five minutes of running around, I re-gathered them to do something more organized to get all our energy out. They decided on freeze tag, a game where you stand still once you’re tagged, and you can only unfreeze when a teammate dives on the ground and scrambles between your legs. Since I was way too large to accomplish such a feat without uprooting a defenseless camper, they kindly allowed me to be able just to dive on the ground and tap one of their ankles. Alex proclaimed himself “it” and the game began. Immediately Garrett was tagged and froze, leaving no time to rest before I raced over and dove head first onto the ground. Mud enveloped me as I slid over and freed him. I stood up sopping and heavy with brown mud, realizing how I had forgotten how fun it was to get dirty. I wiped my eyes to see Zack dive to save a friend from being frozen. His head hit the ground hard and he lay still for a second.

With counselor reactions kicking in, I sprinted over to him. As I came over he lifted his head up. It was completely covered in mud, and before I could say anything he revealed a broad smile, his teeth looking a brilliant white against his now dark brown face. We couldn’t help but explode with laughter.

At that moment, as I lay back in the mud, eyes wet with tears from laughter, I reflected on the importance of taking breaks from the normal routine. I realized that spontaneity underscores my appreciation for life. I recognized that sometimes the best thing to do is intentionally do something completely unexpected, to connect again with that childish, fundamental joy that is so often distorted as a teenager.

I promised myself at that grimy moment that I would never forget that afternoon. I promised that I would use its memory as a reminder that, no matter how stressful and complicated my life will get, there will always be mud to play in.

Pearson will be attending Williams College in Williamstown, MA this fall.